

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow. After amending the claims as set forth above, claims 23, 25-36, and 38-42 are now pending in this application.

Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for the careful consideration given to the claims.

Claim 25 has been amended to correct a minor grammatical error.

Rejection of claims 23, 25-26, 28-30, 32-36, and 38-42 based on How

Claims 23, 25-26, 28-30, 32-36, and 38-42 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 1,862,310 ("How"). For at least the following reasons, this rejection is traversed.

Claim 23 recites, among other things, first and second terminating elements; at least one tube comprising a first end region connected to the first terminating element and a second end region connected to the second terminating element; a first tube part connected to the first terminating element; a second tube part connected to the second terminating element, wherein one of the first and second tube parts comprises two continuous ring-like elements protruding radially towards the other of the first and second tube parts; and at least one sealing element disposed between the two ring-like elements in a spatial region between the first and second tube parts. The two continuous ring-like elements form at least one chamber between the first tube part and the second tube part. The continuous ring-like elements serve as a support that acts radially for the first and second tube parts. How does not teach or suggest this combination of features.

For instance, How does not teach or suggest that "the two continuous ring-like elements form at least one chamber between the first tube part and the second tube part in which the at least one sealing element is disposed." It appears that the PTO has interpreted the combination of the ring 15, the joint sleeve 45, and the annular gland 47 of How as the first tube part of claim 23; the tubular shell 10 of How as the second tube part of claim 23; and the internal bore 16 as the at least one chamber of claim 23. (Pages 2-3 of the Office Action.) However, claim 23 requires that the at least one chamber is formed between the first tube part and the second tube part in which the at least one sealing element is disposed. Even using the PTO's interpretations, the counterbore 16 does not appear to be formed using the tubular shell 10. How states:

In the annular cavity or pocket which is thus produced around the joint sleeve 45 by the bore 16 in the collar 15, a packing 46 is arranged and this packing is pressed into this pocket by an annular gland 47 engaging its inner end with said packing and connected at its outer end with the rear attaching collar 15 by tightening bolts 48...(Page 2, lines 67-76 of How)(emphasis added.)

The bore 16 of How is not formed using the shell 10, but is entirely formed by the components that the PTO considered to be only the first tube part, i.e., the ring 15, the joint sleeve 45, and the annular gland 47 of How. Because the bore 16 is not formed by the shell 10, How does not teach or suggest that the two continuous ring-like elements form at least one chamber between the first tube part and the second tube part.

Also, How does not teach or suggest that one of the first and second tube parts comprises two continuous ring-like elements protruding radially towards the other of the first and second tube parts. The PTO asserts that “[i]t is the bridge created by [the] bored annular passageways (16) that define the ring like elements.” (Page 6 of the Office Action.) However, the annular passageways formed by the bore 16 in the ring 15 and the annular gland 47 are not formed by structures that protrude radially towards the tubular shell 10 (which the PTO considers to be the second tube part of claim 23). Indeed, the tubular shell 10 does not extend to the annular passageways so it is not possible for the structures forming the annular passageways to be considered protruding radially towards the shell 10. As a result, How does not teach or suggest that one of the first and second tube parts comprises two continuous ring-like elements protruding radially towards the other of the first and second tube parts

Because How does not teach or suggest one of the first and second tube parts comprises two continuous ring-like elements protruding radially towards the other of the first and second tube parts or that the two continuous ring-like elements form at least one chamber between the first tube part and the second tube part in which the at least one sealing element is disposed, claim 23 is allowable over How.

Claims 25-26, 28-30, 32-36, and 38-42 depend from and contain all the features of claim 23, and are allowable for the same reasons as claim 23, without regard to the further patentable features contained thereon.

For at least these reasons, favorable reconsideration of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Rejection of claim 27 based on How and Lucke

Claim 27 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over How in view of U.S. Patent 2,512,748 (“Lucke”). Claim 27 depends from and contains all the features of

claim 23. As previously mentioned, How does not teach or suggest that one of the first and second tube parts comprises two continuous ring-like elements protruding radially towards the other of the first and second tube parts or that the two continuous ring-like elements form at least one chamber between the first tube part and the second tube part in which the at least one sealing element is disposed. Lucke does not cure these deficiencies. Thus, no combination of How and Lucke renders claim 23 and its dependent claim 27 unpatentable. For at least these reasons, favorable reconsideration of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Rejection of claim 31 based on How and Feigenbaum

Claim 31 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over How in view of U.S. Patent 4,450,212 ("Feigenbaum"). Claim 31 depends from and contains all the features of claim 23. As previously mentioned, How does not teach or suggest that one of the first and second tube parts comprises two continuous ring-like elements protruding radially towards the other of the first and second tube parts or that the two continuous ring-like elements form at least one chamber between the first tube part and the second tube part in which the at least one sealing element is disposed. Feigenbaum does not cure these deficiencies. Thus, no combination of How and Feigenbaum renders claim 23 and its dependent claim 31 unpatentable. For at least these reasons, favorable reconsideration of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Applicant believes that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing or a credit card payment form being unsigned, providing incorrect information resulting in a rejected credit card transaction, or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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